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SHAKESPEARE'S WORKS

THE SAVOY EDITION

NEWLY EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION.

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THE MERCHANT OF VENICE. The exact place of his birth is not known, but he was undoubtedly living in Stratford at the time of his death, which was at the parish church, 26 April, 1594. After his death, fifty-two years later, on 23 April, 1616, it was said that, like Cervantes, he had died on his birthday.

WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE.

THERE are several ways of spelling the name of Shakespeare, and each of them is passionately advocated by some Shakespearean scholar. The obvious question arises, Why not spell it as he spelt it himself? But only five examples of his signature exist, and they give but uncertain guidance. The best known of these signatures is in the British Museum, and, though it is written in a very crabbed hand, it seems to read "Shakspere." This is the spelling adopted by Mr. Stopford Brooke in his *Primer of English Literature*, as it is also by Professor Dowden in his *Primer of Shakspere*. Knight adopted the same spelling, and appears, in fact, to have been the first to do so, though in the third and fourth folios the final "e" is omitted, and though several Editors had inclined to "Shakespeare." All surnames are subject to variations in the Elizabethan age, and that on the first and second folios, "Shake-speare," appears to have been the usage under the first Stuart. Dr. Johnson is a safe guide in matters where common sense should be predominant, and he gives it as "Shakespeare," the spelling adopted here, if for no other reason, because it includes all the variations. There are other English surnames of similar form, and there is no occasion, as some have done, to make Shakespeare a corruption of "Jacques Pierre," and so to infer that the family was originally French. The name of Nicholas Breakspeare, whose people were of the yeoman class in Hertfordshire, and who rose to be the only English Pope, as Adrian IV., will come into the mind. Of the twenty plays printed separately in quarto during Shakespeare's lifetime, three editions of *Hamlet*; four editions of *Henry IV.*, Part 1; one edition of *Henry IV.*, Part 2; one edition of *King Lear*; one of *Love's Labour's Lost*; two of the *Merchant of Venice*; one of the *Merry Wives*; two of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; one of *Much Ado about Nothing*; one of *Othello*; one of *Pericles*; three of *Richard II.*; four of *Richard III.*; and two of *Troilus*, have all Shakespeare, or more seldom Shake-spear: one only, the *Lear* of 1608, has Shak-speare. It follows, without much doubt, that however he may have signed a legal document, in literature, at all events, his name was *Shakespeare*. It may be worth while to add a few notes. On the monument in the church of Stratford-on-Avon the name is given as Shakespeare: in the parish register it is Shakspere, and the same spelling appears in the three signatures to his will. Of the other two signatures, one is in a copy of Florio's *Montaigne*, and is Shakspere, and one is on a document preserved at the Guildhall, and is contracted, Shaksper, so as to throw little light on the question.

Of the family, birth, and education of our great dramatist we know very little. His father's name was John, a glover in Stratford, who filled in turn many local municipal offices. His mother was Mary Arden, who came of an ancient Warwickshire family. The exact place of his birth is unknown, as is the exact date, but his parents were undoubtedly living in Stratford at the time, for he was baptised in the parish church, 26 April, 1564. After his death, fifty-two years later, namely, 23 April, 1616, it was said that, like Cervantes, he had died upon his birthday. It

is not, however, very likely that a child should be publicly baptised when only three days old. If the biographers of Shakespeare put down nothing but what is certain about him, they would have little indeed to say. At a later period John Shakespeare was living in a house in Henley Street, and it is possible that he occupied it at the time of his son's birth. It, or to be precise, its successor, is now pointed out as "The Birthplace." I shall have occasion further on to explain the meaning of the name and its inventors. Young William is said to have led a wild life, and to have poached on the preserves at Charlcote. But this is unsupported tradition or pure conjecture, as is the story of his having to fly, and being thus driven to seek his fortune in London. All we do know is that the earliest of the plays, *Titus Andronicus*, appeared in 1594, in quarto, but no copy has survived. Some have even doubted its having ever existed. The poem, *Venus and Adonis*, was published in 1593. A pirated edition of *Romeo and Juliet* was printed in 1597, in which year also *Richard II.* and *Richard III.* were issued in quarto. Mr. Laurence Hutton (*Literary Landmarks of London*) is of opinion that Shakespeare came to London in 1585. That he was already married we know from the registers. He had the bishop's license to marry Anne Hathaway in November, 1582, when he was but nineteen. His wife was twenty-seven. Their first child, Susannah, was born in the ensuing May. In 1585 Anne had twins, Hamnet and Judith, named after a friend, Hamnet Sadler, and his wife. The son died at Stratford in 1595, but the daughters survived their father; both married. Rowe started the theory that he left Stratford on account of some poaching affray in which he was engaged, and by which he offended his great neighbour, Sir Thomas Lucy, of Charlcote. It is traditionally reported that this worthy was afterwards caricatured as Justice Shallow in the *Merry Wives*, and unquestionably there is a reference to the arms of the Lucy family (Act I., Scene 1).

In London he probably became a player at Blackfriars, a theatre as nearly as possible where the office of the *Times* newspaper now stands. The exact site is still marked by Playhouse Yard. Crosby Place, in Bishopsgate Street, is mentioned in *Richard III.* Shakespeare had a house in the parish of St. Helen, in 1598. Mr. Hutton observes that Crosby Place, Middle Temple Hall, and St. Saviour's Church in Southwark "are the only buildings still standing in London which are in any way—and even these only by inference—associated with him." *Twelfth Night* was acted in the Middle Temple Hall in February, 1601. A brother, Edmund, was buried in the choir of St. Saviour's in 1607. It is quite possible that he was not present on either occasion. He was connected with the Globe Theatre on Bankside, not far from St. Saviour's, on a site now covered by the buildings of Messrs. Barclay and Perkins. Mr. Hutton identifies it further as having been "directly behind the houses which in 1885 were numbered 13, 15, and 17, Southwark Bridge Road, on the east side of that thoroughfare, nearly opposite Sumner Street." He held some property in Blackfriars, and in the Library of the Corporation, at the Guildhall, there is the original deed conveying to him a house "abutting upon a street leading down to Puddle Wharf." It was close to the King's Wardrobe, and may have been on the site now covered by the house of the Bible Society, or immediately opposite. During his life in London he is said to have frequented the Mermaid Tavern in Cheapside and the Falcon, now marked by the Falcon Dock, on Bankside, and in both his name is associated with that of

Ben Jonson. One thing seems to be certain. Unlike too many of his successors on the stage, he constantly made money, and made it for a fixed purpose, namely, that, while still comparatively young, he might retire to the beloved Warwickshire, whose beauties he praised by implication in nearly every play.

Little as we know of Shakespeare's life in London, we know even less of his life after he retired to Stratford in 1610 or 1611. In 1597 he had bought the Great House there, which he improved and renamed New Place. His father, who had about this time obtained a grant of the well-known coat of arms (*or, on a bend, sable, a spear of the field*), died in 1601. In 1602 he bought a small estate in Old Stratford, and had other property there and in the neighbourhood. He was living at Stratford when the Globe Theatre was burnt, in 1613, and Mr. Dowden conjectures that the manuscripts of the plays perished on that occasion. A great fire occurred at Stratford also in 1614; and before the fifty-four houses then destroyed can have been rebuilt, Shakespeare died, namely, in April, 1616. He probably had premonitions and felt his health declining, as his will was signed in the previous month, having been drawn in January. There is an idle story that he died in consequence of a drinking bout with Jonson and Drayton, but there is no record that either of them was ever at Stratford, and it is pretty certain that Shakespeare, who was busied about the marriage of his second daughter to Thomas Quiney, and who was altogether engaged in making settlements and his will, was not in London during the year 1616. He was buried in front of the chancel step in Stratford Church, where a gravestone, on which there are some doggrel verses requesting his "good friend," the visitor, to spare the dust "enclosed here," is pointed out as his. It may be, but there is no name on it. A bust, coloured to imitate life, was set up after his death, and had auburn hair and blue eyes, but in a fit of mistaken zeal it was painted white by Malone, in 1793. The white paint has been removed of late years, the only "restoration" in the church of which we can approve. The object of the restorers has been; as far as possible, to destroy everything Shakespeare can ever have looked upon. A few old monuments remain, but for the rest we can only re-echo the words of Mr. Winter, in his *Old Shrines and Ivy* (p. 31). As an American pilgrim he went to Stratford:—

"The renovation of the Shakespeare church has not (July, 1891) been completed; but only a few things in it remain to be destroyed, and no doubt the final strokes will be delivered within a short time. The glory and the grandeur of that old church cannot, indeed, be entirely despoiled, even by the unserviceable zeal of bigotry and the regulative spirit of button-making convention. Something of venerable majesty must still survive in the gray mossy stones of that massive tower and in the gloomy battlements of nave and chancel, through which the winds of night sigh sadly over Shakespeare's dust. The cold sublimity of the ancient fabric, with its environment of soft and gentle natural beauty and its associations of poetic renown, can never be wholly dispelled. Almost everything has been done, however, that could be done to make the place modern and conventional. The appearance of the church, especially of its interior, has been materially changed. A few of the changes were, perhaps, essential, and these may have been made wisely; and all of the changes have been made with mechanical skill, if not always with taste. A few more touches, and the inside of the ancient building will be as neat and prim as a box of candles. That was the avowed object of the restoration

—to make the church appear as it used to appear when it was built and before it had acquired any association whatever; and that object has been measurably accomplished. But all change here was an injury.”

The authorities lately appealed in the papers for more money “to make the place modern and conventional,” but nothing can now injure it. It is the same in the town. The picturesque old market cross was destroyed in 1821. A little later an old house in Henley Street, traditionally said to have been “The Birthplace,” was rebuilt in imitation, and the real beams and timbers were taken to America, where they were put together again. One or two pretty Elizabethan houses remain in the streets, but New Place has been pulled down, having previously been almost, if not altogether, rebuilt. The Grammar School, where Shakespeare must have learned to write, was threatened a few years ago, but is still standing. The scenery of the neighbourhood is the perfection of the best English type, often described and alluded to in the plays. This alone remains as he saw it, and even the “restorer” is unable to touch it. The cottage of Richard Hathaway, Shakespeare’s father-in-law, still exists and has been secured by public subscription, not, we may hope, for “restoration,” but for preservation. It only remains to be said that a singularly ugly little building, a combined theatre and library, in a foreign style of Gothic as unlike the beautiful English Elizabethan of Shakespeare’s time as the architect could make it, now occupies the site of New Place.

Many questions have been asked as to Shakespeare’s religion, and whole treatises have been written on the subject. We must remember that in 1564, when he is supposed to have been born, Queen Elizabeth had only been six years on the throne, and that the fires of the Marian persecution were not long extinct, while they dwelt still in the memory of a majority of the population among whom he grew up. Also, it was not until after the death of Elizabeth, and five years before the death of the dramatist himself, that what we know as the authorised version of the Bible was first published. The Book of Common Prayer was still under revision, and was in many respects different from what we have now. Hooker, the greatest ecclesiastical authority of the time, was preaching at the Temple while Shakespeare was in London, but in his works, though the Bible is frequently quoted, it has been found impossible to assign the quotations to any one version. Religion, therefore, was in a transitional state; and, like Queen Elizabeth herself, Shakespeare admired the pomp and pageantry of the older ritual, at the same time that his surroundings forced him to conform to the new. In short, although some of his anti-papal expressions in *King John* are quoted to prove his Protestantism they really tell the other way, as they are considerably softened from the sentiments he found expressed in the play of *The Troublesome Raigne of King John*, printed in 1591. It is, at any rate, certain he was no bigot, and his love of his country would, without doubt, lead him to side against the Queen’s enemies and with the reformers. But, in truth, the matter is one as to which, however interesting, we have little or no information. The efforts of editors and searchers have only resulted in leaving us just where we were. We know very little about Shakespeare, but we know still less about his eminent contemporaries, such as Marlow or Greene, Peele or Lyly. The real Shakespeare, the merry or sad, the amative or poetical, the sublime or stately Shakespeare, is to be found only in the plays, and by them alone can we judge justly of the man.

Within the narrow compass of the present essay it would be absurd to attempt any criticism of the plays of the greatest dramatist England—or, shall we say, Europe?—has produced. It will be enough to note certain facts respecting their production, and especially respecting their chronological and literary history. As to criticism, the civilised world has pronounced them supreme in the highest walk of art. They have their faults, but they are human :

Humanum est nescire et errare :

but the very faults endear them to us. We feel that, great as is their genius, they are not too lofty for our just appreciation.

Let us, in the first place, endeavour to trace the beginnings of this wonderful genius.

The two plays produced while Shakespeare was still young to the stage are *Titus Andronicus* and the first part of *Henry VI.* Mr. Dowden characterises both as work of an earlier period, edited and touched up by Shakespeare for acting purposes. He does not soften the bloodthirstiness of the old English tragedy, but he puts in tender and poetical passages which are foretastes of the power he subsequently developed. In the *Titus* there are verses no one but he, or possibly Greene, could have written. They contrast curiously with the drums and trumpets, slaughter and cruelty, which predominate in the piece. Take such lines as these :—

As when the golden sun salutes the morn,

or,

A barren detested vale you see it is ;
The trees, though summer, yet forlorn and lean,
O'ercome with moss and baleful mistletoe ;

or,

The eagle suffers little birds to sing,
And is not careful what they mean thereby ;

or,

Like a flight of fowl
Scatter'd by winds and high tempestuous gusts.

Similes like these transport English woodland scenery to Rome, and betray clearly the handwriting of the Warwickshire poet.

It is the same with *King Henry VI., Part 1* :—

Glory is like a circle in the water
Which never ceaseth to enlarge itself
Till by broad spreading it disperse to nought.

or,

Between two hawks, which flies the higher pitch ;
Between two dogs, which hath the deeper mouth.

and, indeed, all the scene in the Temple Gardens. It is, however, better for critics not to be too sure, and while in the plays just named there are Shakespearean passages, so, too, in *Love's Labour's Lost*, which is his undoubtedly and wholly, there are lines as weak as the worst in either of the others. Still, we must always remember that as tradition is nought by itself, though it is a powerful prop to history, so internal evidence, though weak and even foolish alone, may change external likelihood into absolute certainty.

Both kinds of evidence abound as to *Love's Labour's Lost*. First printed in 1598, it had already been acted before Queen Elizabeth in 1597, and Knight places it about 1589, when Shakespeare, "being only twenty-five years of age," was a joint proprietor of the theatre at Blackfriars. That was the year when the famous "dancing horse," a middle-sized bay, named Marocco, about fourteen years of age, was exhibited by Banks in London. The allusion to it is not, of course, conclusive, as it may have been put in any time before 1598. The object of the whole piece is to make fun of the Euphuists, of whose absurdities Sir Walter Scott made such amusing use in *The Monastery*. How Shakespeare learned to write so admirably, as in some of the longer speeches in this play, must always be a mystery. Coleridge said of Biron's speech commencing—

Have at you then, affection's men at arms,

in the Fourth Act, that "it is logic clothed in rhetoric." The transition from the old masques, the tragedies full of bloodshed, the comedies full of grossness, is abrupt and astonishing. Mr. Dowden has well remarked that this "is a dramatic plea on behalf of nature and of common sense against all that is unreal and affected." *Richard II.* and *Richard III.* were printed in the same year, as well as *Romeo and Juliet*. *Henry IV.* (both parts) and *Henry V.* followed; and then we come to what has been termed the middle stage. The whole of Charles Knight's dissertation on this subject should be read by anyone who desires to form an opinion. He makes the early period terminate with the *Taming of the Shrew*, the second with the *Merry Wives*, the third with *Timon of Athens*, and the fourth with *Antony and Cleopatra*.

The plays of Shakespeare's middle period, then, may be identified with those he wrote shortly before he left London and returned home to Stratford. The most important of them, or, at least, that one which is most suitable to the modern stage, is *The Merchant of Venice*. It was entered at Stationers' Hall in 1598, but may possibly have been in existence a little earlier. The stories of the pound of flesh and of the caskets are both adaptations from older authors, but this is the first play in which Shakespeare put forth his unerring dramatic power, the first in which, however unlikely the plot, however slight the figures, everyone lives and has his several character: all are human, even Shylock. Passing by *Henry IV.*, *Henry V.*, the *Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and some other plays, we come to the very farcical *Merry Wives of Windsor*, said to have been written in ten days, at the command of Queen Elizabeth, who wished to see Falstaff in love. It is bright and unflagging throughout—"a sunny play," says Mr. Dowden, "to laugh at if not to love." He does not mention the prominent feeling in our minds as we read it—the consciousness of power in every line, the characters, though they are so lifelike and spontaneous in their action, yet falling into line and grouping themselves like puppets at the waving of the magician's wand. It is but a slight piece, no doubt, but there is not in the whole list of plays one which offers stronger evidence of the dramatist's awakening to a knowledge of his own capacity. The *Merry Wives* first appeared in 1602, but was touched up early in the subsequent reign. The same strength is visible in *Much Ado about Nothing*, which also remains a favourite on the modern stage. To the same period we must attribute *As You Like It*, which was registered with the two last-

named, and, like them, still keeps possession of the stage. Mr. Dowden speaks of the scene of *As You Like It* as "French soil," but Mr. Winter would prefer to make it altogether English, and to see in the forest of Arden an allusion both to Mary Arden, the poet's mother, and also to the fair greenwood region, still called the forest of Arden, in his own Warwickshire. "From his earliest boyhood this region must have been his pre-empted field of exploration and adventure, and must have been haunted for him with stately shapes and glorious visions." It cannot be said that *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, which is contemporary with the plays just named, "holds the stage" equally with them. It is eminently intended to be read, not to be acted. It has been described as a "lofty and lovely expression of a luxuriant and happy poetic fancy." It has been suggested with much plausibility that it was written for a show or masque to be performed in the wedding festivities of one of Shakespeare's friends or patrons, possibly of the Earl of Southampton, who married Elizabeth Vernon, in 1598. Like so many of the other plays, it is full of the Warwickshire landscape, though the scene is laid at Athens, and abounds in those charming rural touches which show not only observation but a pure love of nature. The keynote of the whole is given in the opening lines,

But, O, methinks, how slow
This old moon wanes!

and again,

Four nights will quickly dream away the time;
And then the moon, like to a silver bow
New bent in heaven, shall behold the night.

Helena describes a country scene in a couple of lines :

Your tongue's sweet air
More tuneable than lark to shepherd's ear,
When wheat is green, when hawthorn buds appear.

The fairy, in Act ii., sings,

I must go seek some dewdrops here
And hang a pearl in every cowslip's ear.

The same act contains an allusion to the boisterous weather and floods which devastated the Midlands in 1594:—

Therefore the moon, the governess of floods,
Pale in her anger, washes all the air.

The last plays Shakespeare wrote in London are probably those enumerated by Knight under the "Third Period, 1601 to 1607." The first is *As You Like It*, already mentioned. It was followed by *Twelfth Night*. "At our feast," writes Mr. John Manningham, a budding barrister of the Middle Temple, in February, 1602, "we had a play called 'Twelve night or what you will,' much like the comedy of errors, or Menechmis in Plautus, but most like and neere to that in Italian called Inganni." This entry means that *Twelfth Night* was acted probably by, certainly before, the Templars at Candlemas in the beginning of 1602. Knight leaves his usual lines of careful analysis and discerning criticism when he comes to Manningham's little entry. "Venerable Hall of the Middle Temple," he exclaims, "thou art to our eyes more stately and more to be admired since we

looked upon that entry!" There is little else to be said about the play. It marks Shakespeare's rise to a level of high comedy which he never exceeded. The fun is continuous and all of the same by no means exuberant quality; and it marks something more. From this time his work has a different tone. The contrast between *Twelfth Night*, the brightest, and *Measure for Measure*, the saddest of the so-called comedies, is as strongly marked as possible. The next step, after the woes of Isabella and Mariana in the Moated Grange, is straight into tragedy. Accordingly, the next drama, if Knight and most of the other critics are right, is *Hamlet*, and *Hamlet* is followed by *Othello*, and *Othello* by *King Lear*. Finally this cycle is closed with *Macbeth*.

There is a reason for these successions and changes. The year 1601 was disastrous to some of Shakespeare's best friends and patrons. It does not seem that he was himself implicated in the foolish attempt at rebellion made by the two earls, Essex and Sussex, but it is certain that their fall and the death of Essex on Tower Green were severe blows, both to his feelings and to his prosperity. As if to accentuate his grief, his father died on the 8th September in the same year. It was said and is reported by Lambarde, whom Elizabeth called "her handsome man of Kent," that the tragedy of *Richard II.* was aimed at the Queen. "Know ye not," she said, "that I am Richard II.," adding, "This tragedy was played forty times in open streets and houses." She attributed all to Essex, and it is difficult not to believe that Shakespeare was more closely concerned in the seditious movement of 1601 than we can now exactly define. The whole story is told at great length and with much minuteness by Charles Knight in his volume of *Biography*, to which we must refer the reader who desires further information. Certain it is that heavy gloom overshadowed the dramatist, both in London and at home in Warwickshire, and is reflected in the plays of this period. Knight fancies that Shakespeare went to Scotland in 1602, and there visited the scenery described in *Macbeth*. This is very possible. We do not hear anything of his being in London, and we know he was not at Stratford, where one of his brothers was acting as his agent in further purchases of land. The plays just mentioned are all tragical, and with them were three older plays, which he recast but did not write, namely, *Timon of Athens*, *Cymbeline*, and *Pericles*. Of the last very little would seem to be his, and it is not included in the first folio or the present edition.

He finally retired to his residence at Stratford in 1607 or 1608, only visiting London occasionally; and in the few remaining years of his life he seems to have produced a play, generally a tragedy, every year on the average. In this last period appeared *A Winter's Tale* and *Troilus and Cressida*; and the fulness of his powers is displayed in *The Tempest*. In *Henry VIII.*, *Coriolanus*, *Julius Cæsar*, and *Antony and Cleopatra* there is no falling off. On the contrary, there are whole scenes in each of them equal to the best work he ever produced, and, indeed, *Henry VIII.*, which is still often acted, contains some of the finest passages in all he wrote. It was probably composed in, or shortly before, 1613, because in June of that year, while it was being acted at Shakespeare's theatre, the Globe, the discharge of some small cannon, technically termed "chambers," probably in the first act, set fire to the whole house, which was destroyed. It was, however, rebuilt immediately, and in putting this play of *Henry VIII.* on the stage again we read that the manager introduced the utmost possible magnificence, it being

remarked at the time as something strange that Knights of the Garter wore representations of the robes, stars, and collars of the order. In no piece of the last period of the great dramatist's powers is this stage magnificence more apparent than in what most commentators have agreed to select as the last play of all, *Antony and Cleopatra*, which consists of a series of gorgeous or stately pageants. No such processions and ceremonials, as are described in these last-named plays can have been properly carried out in an open street or in the courtyard of an inn. New stage appliances must have been at hand; and, in fact, we know that a genius of a very different kind was actually at work in London, and was introducing, for the first time in England, the Italian methods of producing stage effects and illusions.

It is evident that about the time of the fire at the Globe and its rebuilding, a change had taken place in the possibilities of the stage. I am inclined to attribute that change to the influence, then commencing to be felt, of Inigo Jones, afterwards so famous as an architect. He was born in 1573, so that he was about nine years younger than Shakespeare. He spent some years travelling in Italy before the close of the century, and would seem then to have learned all that could be learned about stage scenery. Italian pageantry was celebrated, and those illusions by which small things were made to look large, and near things distant, had been heard of but never seen before in our island. From 1605 to 1612 Inigo was busy designing these things. The Queen, Anne of Denmark, was devoted to the stage and especially to masques; and her son Henry, Prince of Wales, to whom Jones was surveyor, was equally fond of them. He was thus in full working order at the very time when Shakespeare, indulging his taste for magnificence, was preparing plays for the Globe, for the Inns of Court, for the Queen at Somerset House or Hampton Court, and for Prince Henry at St. James. It was over a play at Whitehall that Jones and Jonson quarrelled. This was in 1610. Jones must have known Jonson or he could not have quarrelled with him, and if he knew Jonson how could he have escaped knowing Shakespeare, who was acknowledged already as the greatest living dramatist? A careful examination of the numerous drawings of stage scenery by Inigo Jones, which still exist, may bring to light some that were specially designed for plays of Shakespeare.

The theatre, as it was before this revolution, probably contained little or no scenery, in the modern sense of the word. A curtain on which a view was painted formed the more elaborate background to a play. A curtain on which no view was painted probably sufficed in most places. The only drawing known to exist of the Elizabethan period is by a Dutchman called De Witt, who in 1596 sketched the interior of the Swan, which was then newly built and stood near the more famous Globe. The drawing is in the University Library at Utrecht, where it was discovered by Dr. Gaedertz, who published an account of it. The Swan was round, with a movable stage in the centre. There were three tiers of seats, labelled *Sedilia*, separated by two galleries. Most of the spectators stood round the stage, literally in the pit, where, occasionally, the stage having been removed, a bear could be baited or a main of cocks fought. In fact, as late as 1672 the Red Bull in Clerkenwell was still like a modern circus, but open to the sky, only the galleries being roofed. In 1879 Lady Pollock published a view, taken in or before 1632, in her *Amateur Theatricals*, of a stage as arranged for the performance of Alabaster's

Roxana. "The stage of which we have here a picture has no such attractions as those to which Addison objected; it relies upon the simplest methods of suggesting all that is to be in the minds of the audience. The curtains and balustrade at the back serve for the watch-tower from which a herald speaks, for Juliet's balcony, and for the aside appearance of any characters in the plays." It is one of the merits of the dramas of William Shakespeare that though they—or a majority of them—were written for such a stage as that just described, they bear, and in many cases are the better for, every improvement in scenic illusion which recent years have invented.

Some acute critics have made a careful study of Shakespeare's metres. It has been thought, with much probability, that they will furnish a trustworthy guide to the date, or at least the succession, of the plays. For elaborate arguments on the subject we may refer the reader to the writings of Professor Dowden and to the *Cambridge Shakespeare*, edited by Mr. Aldis Wright. There are many other essays on the same subject, but these two seem to be the most important, although Dr. Guest's *History of English Rhythms* should be recommended to the advanced student. The rules of prosody were little known and almost unfixed in Shakespeare's time. For the most part he adopted what is often called heroic metre, and his lines scan into ten syllables, alternately accented:—

The sailors sought for safety by our boat.
Comedy of Errors, i. 1.

but, in order to strengthen the effect he wishes to produce, this regularity is departed from, and we have in *The Tempest* (i. 2) such lines as—

Twelve year since, Miranda, twelve year since.

So, too, and with the same object, lines are broken off:—

The miserable have no other medicine,
But only hope:
I've hope to live, and am prepared to die.

Measure for Measure, iii. 1.

As Mr. Wright remarks, "To these 'licenses' we may add verses sometimes with one and sometimes with two additional feet, and many half verses, and some a foot too short." Professor Dowden reasons on these irregularities, and asserts that they form a kind of internal evidence respecting the chronology of the plays. The verse of Shakespeare passed through a regular series of changes in such wise that we can date a play, or think we can, by the versification. It "admits of exact scientific estimation." Of course it must not be pressed too far, but a few lines might be selected from each play and a student asked to date the play by them. Shakespeare began by making line and sentence conterminous. Take the opening lines of one of the early plays, *Love's Labour's Lost*:—

Let fame, that all hunt after in their lives,
Live registered upon our brazen tombs,
And then grace us in the disgrace of death, etc.

Here are no broken lines, no double feet at the end, no running on, but simple, stately, ten-syllable verse. It is the same nearly all through this particular play. If, however, we take a later one, we find a complete change in the methods of versification. M. Furnivall has even calculated the proportion of unstopped lines

in each of the two classes of plays. So also with double endings: when they are rare we may suppose a play to be early. When they are common, it is probably late. A couple of lines from *The Tempest*; first acted in 1611, near the close of the poet's career, shows the truth of the comparison:—

Pros. Thy father was the Duke of Milan and
A prince of power.

Mir. Sir, are you not my father?

The prevalence of rhyme is a sign of an early play. In the later, Shakespeare, conscious of his powers, and experienced in the expression of his thoughts, admitted nothing that could impede or fetter them. Further on a list of the plays in chronological order will be found, together with the reasons which have led scholars to assign the date to each. Here it will be best not to dwell too long on the mechanical side, on the form or versification or language, but on those characteristics which force all readers to acknowledge Shakespeare's place as above that of every other English poet.

The universality of his genius is the first thing that strikes us. It divides itself naturally into two qualities. He astonishes by his knowledge in the first place. He ransacks all nature for the fact he requires at the moment. The late Mr. William Blades made a list of the various employments that have been attributed to Shakespeare by different writers. It is to be found in *Shakespeare and Typography*, a little book written to prove that the dramatist was a printer. According to the list he was, at one time or another, a butcher, a schoolmaster, a woolman, a skewer sharpener, a farmer, a lawyer, a surgeon, a physiologist, a psychologist, a soldier, a sailor, a musician, a botanist, an ethnologist, a naturalist, and an alchemist among other things. To this list may be added the evidence that he was a falconer, a tailor, a gardener, an architect, a student of folklore, of the Bible, and of angling; and, while we are about it, we may mention the theory that Shakespeare's plays were written by Francis Bacon, Viscount St. Alban's.

All these and other theories have their origin in recognising the knowledge shown by the dramatist of subjects which might have been considered beyond his ken. At the very beginning of the volume we have an example. The description of a ship in a heavy sea, the behaviour of the officers and crew, and the final shipwreck, are in the nautical language of the time. Their brevity is characteristic of Shakespeare. He has no fads. A man who had enjoyed such varied experiences never drags any of them in. He knew all about maritime affairs. They are there when they are wanted. They are dismissed like one of the characters when they have played their part. He must have studied ships and the sea for some time before he could write about them as he does, but he never intrudes his experiences or expects his reader to be interested in them except in so far as they conduce to the elucidation of his plot. This restraint, then, astonishes the reader almost as much as the knowledge. The "universality" of Shakespeare's genius, in what he has told us as well as in what he has left untold, calls forth our admiration and wonder. His knowledge of the sea is so extensive and accurate that it has led many critics to think he must have spent some part of his life on board ship. But if we take almost any other of the innumerable subjects on which he touches, we find him equally at home, equally conversant, and equally reticent. Mr. Blades

almost proves that he was a printer, fully proves that he was thoroughly acquainted with the art of printing as practised at that period, and shows that he made constant allusions to it.

We have mentioned architecture, and may examine his writings to find out what he knew of that art. As with his seamanship, he is thoroughly well-informed. In fact, Mr. Gotch, the architect, and other writers have noted the fact that we owe to him alone an adequate account of the Elizabethan procedure in designing and building a house. In all the plays there are allusions to buildings, in many there are descriptions. He evidently admired what was good. Even Falstaff is struck by the beauty of Shallow's house: and in *Twelfth Night* we remember that Sebastian would go sight-seeing:—

Let us satisfy our eyes
With the memorials and things of fame
That do renown this city.

And in *The Tempest* we have—

The cloud capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
The solemn temples

of Prospero's vision. But the most important passage is in the Second Part of *Henry II.* (i. 3) where Bardolph describes the architectural methods of the day:—

When we mean to build
We first survey the plot, then draw the model:
And when we see the figure of the house
Then must we rate the cost of the erection;
Which if we find outweighs ability,
What do we then but draw anew the model
In fewer offices, or at least desist
To build at all?

He next speaks of the situation, the sure foundation, the questioning of surveyors, and other operations, such as calculating the cost, lest—

Like one that draws the model of a house,
Beyond his power to build it; who, half through,
Gives o'er and leaves his part created cost
A naked subject to the weeping clouds.

The word "architect" occurs in Shakespeare's works, but in this passage apparently only surveyors are mentioned, and Mr. Gotch makes use of it to prove that surveyors and architects were the same. To my mind, Lord Bardolph proves that the building was designed and planned chiefly by the person most concerned, namely, the owner himself. Mr. Gotch shows, in a paper read before the Architectural Association in 1892, that this was the case in Shakespeare's day, when certainly Hatfield, Burghley, and Cobham, to name only three, were designed by their owners, and Shakespeare's allusions to house building are accurate to the smallest particular.

The close observation of human character is coupled with an equally close observation of nature. References to green pastures, to woods and trees and fields of corn, to cliffs and rocks and torrents, are common throughout the plays. In them, too, but still more in the Sonnets, we have mention of birds and their songs.

Country life, landscape and birds are combined with summer insects and flowers, with oaks and osiers and velvet leaves, and the wind, the rain and the sunshine, to produce the effect he sought for. Nothing of the kind comes amiss to him. It has always been assumed that in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* there is a reference to the stormy weather and floods which visited England in the summer of 1594. Titania upbraids Oberon with having caused them:—

Never, since the middle summer's spring,
Met we on hill, in dale, forest or mead,
By paved fountain or by rushy brook,
Or in the beached margent of the sea,
To dance our ringlets to the whistling wind,
But with thy brawls thou hast disturbed our sport.

Some thirty lines follow in which we read of contagious fogs, of pelting rivers, of empty folds and unreaped fields, of the pale moon, and all "the progeny of evil." The scene is laid in a wood near Athens, but all the picture is drawn in Warwickshire. It would be easy to multiply quotations from passages like this one. They abound in the comedies, and are also numerous in the historical plays and the tragedies. Here are six lines from *King John* which paint a picture worthy of Turner:—

He is forsworn, if e'er those eyes of yours
Behold another day break in the east:
But even this night, whose black contagious breath
Already smokes about the burning crest
Of the old, feeble and day-wearied sun,
Even this ill night, your breathing shall expire.

In *Henry VIII.* Wolsey finds no better simile for his fall than one direct from nature:—

This is the state of man: to-day he puts forth
The tender leaves of hopes; to-morrow blossoms,
And bears his blushing honours thick upon him;
The third day comes a frost, a killing frost,
And when he thinks, good easy man, full surely
His greatness is a-ripening, nips his root,
And then he falls.

These comparisons and descriptions are most frequent in the tragedies, as in a few lines from *Romeo and Juliet*:—

The grey-eyed morn smiles on the frowning night,
Chequering the eastern clouds with streaks of light
And flecked darkness.

They abound in *Hamlet* and in *King Lear*. The King in *Hamlet* asks of his hand—

Is there not rain enough in the sweet heavens
To wash it white as snow?

And Hamlet himself speaks of the picture of his father—

A station like the herald Mercury
New lighted on a Heaven-kissing hill.

Everyone remembers the famous description of the scenery near Dover, from which to this day one steep height is known as Shakespeare's Cliff (*King Lear*, iv. 6.).

Macbeth is so full of "local colour" that many have believed the dramatist visited Scotland in 1602 before he wrote it. The King observes—

This castle hath a pleasant seat; the air
Nimble and sweetly recommends itself;

and there are throughout the whole play references to the breezy heights so unlike anything Shakespeare could have seen between Stratford and London.

The pages of Shakespeare show very plainly that he was well acquainted with what we term field sports. They were not sports, but necessities, when the population of all England was not equal to that of London now, and countless wild beasts roamed over open chases and forests and had to be destroyed for protection or for food. Wolves were common in the uncultivated lands of Northampton, Rutland, Oxford, Essex, Huntingdon and Buckingham, in the reign of Henry IV., as we gather from a deed quoted by Blount. If so, they were probably quite as common in the forest of Arden; but by the time of Shakespeare, though traditions and tales in plenty must have survived, the wolf was probably extinct in England, though it survived in Scotland and Ireland and was common in France. Wild boars were numerous in Sherwood and Arden, and their existence is commemorated in the heraldry of the old families of Lincolnshire, Kent, Yorkshire, Suffolk and Essex, as well as Warwickshire. Shakespeare probably refers to one in the Second Part of *Henry IV.*—

Doth the old boar feed in the old frank?

A frank was an enclosure in which a boar could be surrounded and penned in without being caught, and could be killed when he was sufficiently fat. The silver boar of Richard III. was no doubt wild, and was a badge of the manor or honour of Windsor. The Boar's Head in Eastcheap has long disappeared, but the sign, carved in stone, is now in the museum at the Guildhall.

Deer are frequently mentioned in the plays, and were no doubt plentiful in Warwickshire in Shakespeare's time. An oft repeated tradition has it that killing deer in the preserves of Charlecote led to his leaving Stratford. It is not probable that any red deer existed there, but the fallow deer, and possibly the roe, alone. There are many allusions to deer hunting, and in *Love's Labour's Lost* we have ladies joining in the "shoot," as it is called, and taking their stand by a bush where, as the princess laughingly observes, they may "play the murderer." In the Third Part of *King Henry VI.* (iii. 1) two keepers watch for deer with crossbows. Guns were in use, however, and are very distinctly mentioned as "birding pieces" in the *Merry Wives of Windsor* (v. 5). In *Cymbeline* (iii. 4) there is a mention of "the elected deer," a deer, no doubt, selected from the herd. A whole scene (iv. 2) is devoted to deer hunting in *As You Like It*, and from Shakespeare's use of huntsmen's technical terms, it is evident he knew all about it. Foxes, polecats, hares, badgers, wild cats or catamounts, and other denizens of the forests are frequently named in the plays, as well as weasels, dormice, squirrels and hedgehogs. But throughout there is more notice of birds than of beasts, and there are more allusions to falcons than to any other birds. It is easy to understand that in days when guns were scarce, when slings and arrows were the most useful weapons, and when, moreover, hunting was not so much a diversion as a business, falcons would be very frequently employed, and every one who lived a country life would be

familiar with falconers' jargon and understand allusions to jesses, lures, hoods, mews, soaring, stooping and so forth. The falcon chiefly mentioned is of course the peregrine, but there are notes also about the stanniel and the eyas-musket. Mr. Harting, in his delightful *Ornithology of Shakespeare*, to which the reader is referred for further notes on falconry, explains these terms for us. The stanniel is identified as the kestrel, a charming little hawk, easily tamed, with all the characteristics of a "noble" falcon, except the strength and courage. Ladies and children may pet kestrels to accustom their hands to hawks, but, except as playthings, they are useless. In *Twelfth Night* (ii. 5) we have Malvolio called a stanniel, and Mr. Harting interprets the word as a contraction of "standgale," a country name of the "windhover" or kestrel, from its pretty way of breasting the breeze and hanging motionless on the wing. The only other English bird which does this is the kingfisher. The eyas-musket is mentioned in the *Merry Wives*, and means a male sparrow hawk brought up from the nest. This is one of the smallest of the birds trained by falconers, and, in the east, is held in the hand and actually thrown at the quarry. On this account possibly its name was given to a small gun, even as falconet was the name given to a different kind of fowling piece.

Allusions to falconry occur in many places, and often two or three times in the same play. In the Induction to the *Taming of the Shrew*, we read—

Dost thou love hawking? Thou hast hawks will soar
Above the morning lark:

and in the body of the same play—

My falcon now is sharp and passing empty,
And till she stoop she must not be full gorged,
For then she never looks upon her lure.
Another way I have to man my haggard,
To make her come and know her keeper's call;
That is, to watch her, as we watch those kites
That bate and beat and will not be obedient.

Act iv., Sc. 1.

If we go through this passage we are struck with the complete knowledge of the subject displayed. "Falcon" is always feminine. The female peregrine is much larger than the tiercel, or male bird. She is much more esteemed as being so much more powerful. A careful trainer does not allow his falcon to be fed up or gorged till she has done her day's work, "for then she never looks upon her lure," but flies perhaps to some distant rock or tree and sleeps. This is especially the case if she is "a haggard," that is a wild hawk and trained, not brought up from the nest. A haggard, but for her wildness, is always to be preferred as stronger and more skilful in taking game than an eyas or nestling. There are several keepers' calls. The commonest is a whistle of two notes, but for a distance a peculiar holloa is necessary, and when crying the keeper waves the lure. A great object in training is to persuade the hawk under all circumstances to come to the lure. For this purpose it is always baited with a small piece of meat, something to reward and occupy the falcon, which must never be disappointed. The lure itself is usually a horseshoe decorated with wings and weighted with lead, so that

the hawk cannot carry it, to teach her not to carry off game that she has killed. The kites that bate and beat are simply ill-behaved falcons, whom the keeper maligns as kites, for no one ever troubled himself to train a real kite, though Mr. Salvin had a tame one. They bait, or flutter, off their stand and beat their wings on the ground and refuse to obey the trainer, who, by watching them for many hours at a stretch, at length succeeds in tiring them out.

The word *eyas* occurs several times in Shakespeare, and is usually a term of affection. The dramatist in his experience of falconry knew how engaging a young hawk is, with his bold, plucky ways, his affection for his teacher, and the beautiful brown eyes so quick to follow every movement and every sound. The tassel gentle, or tiercel gentle, as a male *eyas* peregrine is named, is a most charming bird, and one of the difficulties of falconry is not to pet him so as to prevent his soaring high and ranging wide. Juliet longs "for a falconer's voice, to lure this tassel gentle back again." Elsewhere (*Troilus and Cressida*, iii. 2) Shakespeare speaks of the falcon and the tercel. In *Hamlet* we read of "an eyrie of children, little eyasses." Another technical term is "mew." The word is used still in London and some other towns to denote a stable. Originally it meant a place for keeping hawks. The king's hawks, when he lived at Westminster, were kept at the neighbouring village of Charing Cross. The King's Mews were established in 1377, and were turned into stables in 1537 and finally cleared away in 1830, when Trafalgar Square was placed on the site. To "enmew," a derivative, occurs in *Measure for Measure* (iii. 1), and means to enclose or guard as a hawk holds a fowl he has taken. Another term is "jesses." These are the short leather thongs on the hawk's legs which enable the falconer to keep it steady on the fist: Othello says of Desdemona (iii. 3), "If I do prove her haggard"—that is wild or wandering—"though that her jesses were my dear heart strings, I'd whistle her off and let her down the wind to prey at fortune." When a hawk flies down a wind there is sometimes a difficulty in reclaiming it. A falcon some years ago flew down the wind from near Belfast, in pursuit of a woodcock, and was found and shot, forty-eight hours later, at Aberdeen. "Pitch," another term in falconry, refers to the soaring of a hawk to obtain a pitch, or height, from which to drop on his prey. In the First Part of *Henry VI.* Warwick says he can judge

Between two hawks, which flies the higher pitch,

and in *Henry V.* the Dauphin praises his horse by comparing his paces to those of a falcon:

When I bestride him I soar, I am a hawk: he trots the air.

In all these examples and others Shakespeare evidently refers to the peregrine. Goshawks and sparrow-hawks were also used in falconry in his time, but they are termed "ignoble," while peregrines, gersfalcons, merlins and even little hobbies are "noble." The difference is in the colour of the eye and the length of the wing. The eye of the noble falcon is always brown, of the ignoble yellow or white. The second quill feather of the merlin's wing is the longest. In the sparrow-hawk it is the fourth or fifth. The short-winged hawks do not soar: and Page, in the *Merry Wives*, probably refers to a sparrow-hawk when he says—

I have a fine hawk for the bush.

In cover a soaring merlin would be useless. In *Macbeth* one of the portents of the king's death is that—

On Tuesday last
A falcon, towering in her pride of place,
Was by a mousing owl hawk'd at and kill'd.

But the most remarkable of these passages occurs at the beginning of the second act of the Second Part of *King Henry VI.* The King and Queen are at St. Alban's, hawking with Suffolk, the Cardinal and Gloucester. They are "flying at the brook," that is heron hawking, and, though the wind is high, "Old Joan," evidently a favourite, has flown a pitch above the rest, which gives occasion for pious reflections on the part of Henry:—

And he adds—
To see how God in all his creatures works.
Yes, man and birds are fain of climbing high.
To which Suffolk rejoins—

My lord protector's hawks do tower so well;
They know their master loves to be aloft
And bears his thoughts above his falcon's pitch.

And Gloucester asserts—

My lord, 'tis but a base ignoble mind
That mounts no higher than a bird can soar.

The image is carried farther by subsequent speakers, but these lines are enough to show what importance Shakespeare as a practical falconer attached to the high pitch of a well-trained falcon.

Shakespeare was evidently acquainted with the other members of the falcon family. The eagle occurs several times, as in *Henry VI.*, Part 3, where Richard refers to his father as "that princely eagle"; and the Roman eagle is twice named in *Cymbeline*. In the *Taming of the Shrew* there are several lines (ii. 1) on the buzzard, a very ignoble hawk indeed, its taking a turtle being ridiculed as no more a likely feat than if the turtle should take the buzzard. In *Hamlet* the prince describes his own mental condition:

I know a hawk from a handsaw, | A

an expression frequently explained to mean a "heronshaw." The First Part of *Henry IV.* (iv. 1) has another puzzling passage:

All plumed like estridges that with the wind
Bated like eagles having lately bathed.

Some read "wing the wind," and other readings have been proposed. Douce gives much attention to the passage, and asserts that "estrige" means a goshawk, and that the same bird is mentioned in *Antony and Cleopatra*, where we read of anger:

And in that mood the dove will peck the estrige.

Certainly a goshawk, like a buzzard, belongs to the category of ignoble hawks, and certainly also he is subject to fits of ill-temper or sulkiness so strong that he would probably even let a turtle dove peck at him without noticing the insult. Quite otherwise meant is the allusion in the Third Part of *Henry VI.*:—

So cowards fight, when they can fly no further;
So doves do peck the falcon's piercing talons.

There can be little doubt of the correctness of Douce's interpretation of *estrige*. There was a manor in Nottinghamshire, held by the service *mutandi unum estricium*, mewing a goshawk. Hawks are named twice in one of the *Sonnets* :—

Some glory in their birth
Some in their hawks and hounds,

and again,

Love is
Of more delight than hawks or horses :

but we cannot, of course, assert that Shakespeare does not mean falcons in such passages.

The crowing cock, "strutting chanticleer" as he is called in the *Tempest* (i. 2), is frequently mentioned, as is the hen, at least once in the speech of Volumnia, in *Coriolanus* (v. 2). Crows and choughs are in *King Lear* (iv. 6), as being seen at Dover, but Mr. Saunders observes that choughs have not been recognised eastward of the cliffs of Dorsetshire for many years past. Nightingales were admired for their song in Shakespeare's days :

And twenty caged nightingales do sing,

in the *Taming of the Shrew* (Ind. 2). Autolycus, in *The Winter's Tale*, mentions the lark, the thrush and the jay ; and in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (iii. 1) are—

The ouzel cock, so black of hue,
With orange tawny bill,
The throistle with his note so true,
The wren with little quill,
The finch, the sparrow and the lark,
The plain-song cuckoo grey.

There remains the martlet, or swallow, which flits so prettily into the first act of *Macbeth* :—

This guest of summer,
The temple haunting martlet, does approve
By his loved mansionry, that the heaven's breath
Smells wooingly here : no jutty, frieze,
Buttress or coign of vantage, but this bird
Has made his pendent bed and procreant cradle :
Where they most breed and haunt, I have observed
The air is delicate.

The other birds most often spoken of by Shakespeare are larks, though he observed all English birds and loved their singing.

Melodious birds sing madrigals

in the *Merry Wives of Windsor*, and in *Love's Labour's Lost* :—

Merry larks are ploughmen's clocks.

The prettiest of these allusions is in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* :—

Your tongue's sweet air
More tunable than lark to shepherd's ear.

In the xxixth Sonnet, and also in *Cymbeline*, we have the lark at Heaven's gate :

Hark, hark ! the lark at Heaven's gate sings,

and again,

Like to the lark at break of day arising
From sullen earth, sings hymns at Heaven's gate.

as is this enumeration it shows that Shakespeare, as compared with Bacon, was ignorant of what we call "horticulture." Bacon divides his list by months, and especially chooses what will suit "the climate of London." Shakespeare makes no distinction. His open air plays are full of wild flowers, and their scenery is, with one remarkable exception, not that of London, but that of the old forest of Arden in South Warwickshire. The exception is to be found in the famous scene in the Temple Garden, in the First Part of *King Henry VI.*, which at least proves that in Shakespeare's time, if not earlier, roses of two colours were grown. Plantagenet says:—

From off this brier pluck a white rose with me,
and Somerset rejoins:—

Pluck a red rose from off this thorn with me,
But if we may argue from the mention of briars and thorns, the roses, even within a garden, were wild. In *Love's Labour's Lost* the perfume of roses is mentioned

Blow like sweet roses in this summer air,
"Roses in bud" and "roses blown" occur just afterwards. In the *Sonnets* we find, as we might expect, a great many passages in which the rose is named. The very first simile in the very first sonnet concerns the rose:—

From fairest creatures we desire increase,
That thereby beauty's rose might never die,
In the xxxvth—

Roses have thorns and silver fountains mud,
The LVth is all about them:—

The rose looks fair, but fairer we it deem,
For that sweet odour which doth in it live,
The canker blooms have full as deep a dye
As the perfum'd tincture of the roses,
Hang on such thorns and play as wantonly
When summer's breath their m'ked buds disclosed
But, for their virtue only is their show,
They live unwood'd and unrespected fade,
Die to themselves. Sweet roses do not so;
Of their sweet deaths are sweetest odours made.

The touch of melancholy, so often associated by Shakespeare with roses and other flowers, is well illustrated in *Cymbeline*, where Imogen lies down on the grass to rest:—

These flowers are like the pleasures of the world.

The contrast these lines and passages present to Bacon's remarks and list of flowers in his famous essay, *Of Gardens*, would be enough to refute the silly theory that he wrote the plays. But no such refutation is necessary.

The chronological arrangement of Shakespeare's plays is a matter upon which most of the editors and critics have been almost unanimous. There are differences as to certain plays, but not many. All agree that *Romeo and Juliet*, in a pirated and imperfect form, was the first to be printed. That was in 1597. Yet *Romeo and Juliet* cannot be the first written. Mr. Dowden's arrangement is probably the

The robin is mentioned once or twice. In *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, Speed judges that Valentine is in love from various "special marks," such as sighing, weeping and so forth, and because he could

Relish a love song like a robin-redbreast.

Shakespeare's familiarity with flowers has been a constant subject of remark. At least two books have been published about it. Mr. Beisley wrote *Shakespeare's Garden*, and Mr. Ellacombe *The Plant-Lore and Garden Craft of Shakespeare*. Almost every play has mention of flowers, and in some there are many mentions. The garden of his day was very different from anything of the kind now. There can be little doubt that in Elizabethan times it was primarily intended for a pleasance and secondarily for an orchard, and that the growth, cultivation and enjoyment of flowers for their own sake was a very subordinate object. True, the number of flowers was then very limited. Europe, Asia, Africa, America and Australasia had not been searched for fuchsias, geraniums, orchids and lilies, nor had budding and grafting been used for the improvement and variation of anything more beautiful to the eye than apples and pears. Remembering this, and remembering, too, how seldom flowers of any kind are mentioned by the poets and playwrights contemporary with Shakespeare, we are surprised how much he makes of them. Mr. Beisley, treating only of twenty-six plays, names at least sixty different flowers. Almost all are more or less what we call wild. Not one, that is, seems to have been in any way cultivated, except that roses, violets and a few others were brought within sheltering walls, and were allowed to grow under the fruit trees. In Paul Hentzner's description of the gardens at Theobalds in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, there is much about arbours, fruit trees, herbs, labyrinths, fountains and marble pillars, but not a single flower is mentioned. The best account of the gardens of Shakespeare's time is to be found here and there in the delightful pages of Mr. Reginald Blomfield's book, *The Formal Garden in England*. The garden of Kenilworth at the time of the queen's visit had sanded walks, obelisks of porphyry, balustrades and coats of arms, and was "planted with apple trees, pears and cherries." Bacon describes a garden in his *Essays*, and mentions in a single paragraph as many flowers as there are in all Shakespeare, showing that plants were then beginning to be cultivated as flowers, and not merely as the blossoms of fruit trees. In *Measure for Measure*, Angelo's garden is really a vineyard:—

He hath a garden circummured with brick,
Whose western side is with a vineyard backed;
And to that garden is a planced gate.

In *Hamlet*, in a well-known and oft-quoted passage, we have mention of rosemary, pansies, fennel, columbines, rue, daisies and violets, and we read also of "long purples," a kind of orchis, called sometimes "dead men's fingers." In *Othello* we meet with poppies and a medicinal plant, colocynth. The primrose, harebell and marigold are in *Cymbeline*. In *A Winter's Tale* we find daffodils, saffron, rosemary, rue, violets, lavender, carnations, gillflowers and others. The cowslip, dogrose, wild thyme, oxlip, violet, woodbine, muskrose and eglantine figure in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In other plays occur camomile, clover, cockle, fleur de lis or fleur de luce, furze or gorse, hawthorn, marjoram and peonies. Long

best that can be made. In his *Literature Primer on Shakspeare* he begins with *Titus Andronicus*, but most critics only allow that this play was touched up and improved by Shakespeare. It was included in the First Folio, having been entered at Stationers' Hall as early as February 1593.

King Henry VI., Part 1, was first printed in the folio, but seems to belong to the same period as the foregoing, and was probably not written but only improved by Shakespeare.

Love's Labour's Lost is Shakespeare's own work. In quarto, it first appeared in 1598 and bore his name on the title.

The Comedy of Errors is also an early work, but was not printed till it appeared in the folio of 1623.

The Two Gentlemen of Verona also first appeared in the folio, but Mr. Dowden places it here, from the internal evidence of the language and metre.

A Midsummer Night's Dream was first printed in quarto in 1600. It is sometimes thought to have been written for the wedding of Shakespeare's friend and patron, the Earl of Southampton, who married Elizabeth Vernon in 1598, but the praise of single blessedness (Act I., Scene 1) goes against this idea.

King Henry VI., Part 2, and *King Henry VI.*, Part 3, belong to the same period, but Part 2, in quarto, if it ever existed, has been lost. Part 3 appeared in that form in 1595.

King Richard III. was printed in quarto in 1597.

Romeo and Juliet was published in quarto in the same year (1597), and was the poet's first genuine effort in romantic tragedy.

King Richard II. appeared in quarto in the same year as the two foregoing, but was greatly added to and retouched in an edition issued in 1615. Queen Elizabeth is supposed to have referred to this play towards the end of her life, but as there were others on the same subject it is not certain.

King John comes next, according to Mr. Dowden, being founded on an older play. The first authentic edition is that in the folio of 1623.

The Merchant of Venice first appeared in quarto in 1600, but had been at least two years in existence before it was printed, and Mr. Dowden assigns it to 1596.

King Henry IV., Parts 1 and 2, may be described as one play in ten acts. They were entered at Stationers' Hall in 1598, but only Part 1 exists now in quarto of that date. The earliest date of Part 2 is 1600.

King Henry V. seems from internal evidence to have been written in 1599. The first quarto edition, 1600, was pirated and is imperfect. The play was recast before the writer's death, and appears in the folio of 1623 greatly amended.

The Taming of the Shrew first appeared in the folio, and seems to have been only Shakespeare's in part. A play with nearly the same name came out in 1594, and was improved into the present version.

The Merry Wives of Windsor must have been written for, if not actually at the command of, Queen Elizabeth. It was printed in quarto in 1602, and retouched, with allusions to King James, before inclusion in the folio edition.

Much Ado about Nothing was entered at Stationers' Hall in 1600, and bears Shakespeare's name in the quarto edition.

As You Like It was entered in the same year, having probably been written in 1599, but no copy is known to exist earlier than the first folio.

Twelfth Night also occurs first in the folio, but was acted in the Middle Temple Hall as early as the beginning of 1602.

Julius Cæsar was produced in the year 1601, but in the printed form is first found in the folio of 1623.

Hamlet was printed in quarto in 1603.

All's Well that Ends Well is probably the play mentioned by Meres in 1598 as *Love's Labour's Won*, but the first edition is that of the folio in 1623.

Measure for Measure first appears in the folio.

Troilus and Cressida first appeared in quarto in 1609, and was reprinted in the same year.

Othello appeared in quarto in 1622, after Shakespeare's death, but Mr. Dowden is of opinion that it was written in or about 1604.

King Lear was printed in quarto in 1608, but was acted towards the end of 1606.

Macbeth first appears in the folio, but was acted at the Globe in 1610.

Antony and Cleopatra was probably in existence in May, 1608, but the earliest edition now known is that of the folio of 1623.

Coriolanus was first published in the folio: by the metrical test the critics adjudge it to 1608.

Timon of Athens, which cannot be wholly by Shakespeare, appeared first in 1623.

Cymbeline appears first in the folio.

The Tempest first appeared in the folio, but was probably written in 1610.

The Winter's Tale was seen at the Globe in 1611 by Dr. Forman, but was first printed in the folio.

King Henry VIII. was acted in 1613, when an explosion of "chambers," or small cannon, set fire to the Globe Theatre. It was first printed in 1623. Some passages are considered by the best judges to have been written by Fletcher.

The text has throughout been conformed as far as possible to that of the first folio edition, the spelling having been modernised, and such stage directions as seemed absolutely necessary having been inserted.

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